Assistance Programme, Agricultural Workers-Central Scheme and Handloom Weavers-Thrift, Health and Group Insurance Schemes.

(c) Expenditure on Social Security Schemes is revised by the Government from time to time and outlays have been enhanced for greater coverage.

Funds available with EPF organisation

376. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA:
SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the manner in which Government propose to meet a deficit of Rs. 927 crores, because of the increase in rate of interest from 8.5% to 9.5% on EPF;

(b) what is the total fund available with Employees Provident Fund Organisation as on 31st December, 2004 and in what sectors these funds have been invested; and

(c) what is the total revenue generated from investments made during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) The matter is being examined by EPFO regarding the payment of interest at the rate of 9.5% to the members of Employees Provident Fund during 2004-05.

(b) Break-up of investments of Employees Provident Fund Organisation Funds in different securities as on 31.12.2004 is as follows:

Category	Amount (Rs. in crores)
Central Govt. Securities	19,327.28
State Govt./Govt. Guaranteed Securities	14,071.73
Special Deposit Scheme of Central Govt.	53,449.95

Category	Amount (Rs. in crores)
Public Financial Institutions	21,961.18
Public Account	26,559.94
TOTAL:	135,370.08

(c) Total revenue generated from investment during last three years are as under (Rs. in Crores):-

	EPF	Pension	EDLI Fund
2001-02	5673.42	2060.68	49.57
2002-03	5859.65	2419.73	64.47
2003-04	5947.61	2810.16	77.31

Availability of trained and skilled Labour

†377. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of skilled and trained labourers in the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the products of the country are costlier than that of European countries due to lack of skill and training;

(d) if so, the facts in this regard; and

(e) the time-bound targeted scheme of Government to enhance availability of skilled and trained labourers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) No Sir, however the skill level of the workers require upgradation.

(b) Government is aware of the requirement of upgradation of skill of the workers with a view to be competitive in the present labour market. Accordingly, various skill training measures including testing and certifi-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.